

he almost entirely dominated the Toda people at the time of my visit. We have already seen that he has succeeded in altering the constitution of the *naim*, and several examples are given in this book of his interference in the normal course of Toda affairs; interference usually in favour of his own family or friends. In at least one case (see Chap. XVI) during my visit he considered himself superior to ceremonial laws.

He seemed to me to afford an excellent example of the process by which one man may bring about considerable changes in the laws and regulations of a community; though I was told in several instances that the Todas would revert to their old customs as soon as Kuriolv died.

I did not obtain a full account of the duties of the *naim* and of the affairs which come under its jurisdiction. There is no doubt, however, that it is largely concerned with the settlement of civil disputes arising between individuals, families, and clans. As I have already mentioned, it seemed to me that it was almost exclusively engaged during my visit in the regulation of the disputes arising out of the *terersih* custom. In one such case the question of funeral contributions was involved, and I have no doubt that the settlement of any dispute arising from this source would come within the province of the *naim*, and probably any doubtful point in the working of the social regulations would be submitted to it.

In addition to its functions in disputes between individuals, the *naim* has wide functions in connexion with Toda ceremonial. It decides when many ceremonies take place, and has the chief word in regulating the affairs of the *ti* dairies. Thus it appeared that the various arrangements and alterations of arrangements in connexion with the migration of the buffaloes of the Nodrs *ti* which were made during my visit were the work of the *naim*, or, at any rate, of its chief members.

CRIME

I have no knowledge about the power of the *naim* in criminal as opposed to civil matters. I never heard of inquiry by the *naim* into any criminal offence committed by one man against another or against the community. It is, however,

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674 doubtful whether crime can be said to exist among the Todas.

Acts such as infanticide are committed which would be regarded as crimes by others, but since these are the outcome of custom they are not crimes from the Toda point of view.

673 Again, we have seen that the Todas have a code of offences against the dairy, but these must be regarded as sins rather than as crimes, for they are neither investigated nor punished by the civil authority, the *naim*, but are punished directly by the gods, and the various ceremonies described in Chapter XIII are expiatory and not punitive.

578 The list of offences given on p. 295 includes quarrelling between people of the same clan at a festival and quarrelling

673 in the dairy. In both cases the quarrelling is an offence

623 against the dairy, and I have no information to show whether quarrels ever lead to acts of violence which might in other

671 places become the subject of criminal investigation. So far as I could learn, any investigation by the *naim* would only deal with the causes which had led to the quarrel; it would deal only with the civil and not with the criminal aspect of the case.

583 Again, the custom of *terersthi*, or transference of wives, which is the chief subject of the deliberations of the *naim*, some-

586 times leads to acts of violence. A woman who has been

674 transferred by the *naim* from one man to another may be carried off by force from the home of the former, but,

177 however such an act may be regarded from our standpoint, it is not a crime from the Toda point of view, but merely the carrying out of the decision of the judicial authority. So many Todas are, however, discovering that such an act is regarded as a crime by Europeans that there will probably soon come about a state of public opinion which will regard such abduction as a crime, and possibly the same idea may become attached to the whole custom of transference of a woman from one man to another unwillingly. It seemed not unlikely at the time of my visit that this conversion of a custom into a crime might be assisted by the action of the Government.

000 In the legend of Kwoten, this hero kills Parden, but so far

In the legend of Kwoten, this hero kills Parden, but so far
 as I know this is the only example of murder, either legendary
 or historical, among the Todas. The Todas may take part
 in the murder of a Kurumba who has been working magic,
 but this is of course no crime from the Toda point of view,
 but an obvious method of self-defence, for it is believed that
 the only way of stopping Kurumba sorcery is to kill the
 sorcerer.

With the exception of the occurrences accompanying the
 transference of wives, which I have already considered, I
 heard of no case of assault by one Toda on another.

Similarly, I heard of no offence against property except
 in connexion with the dairy. So far as I know, ornaments
 or clothing are never stolen. In the list of offences against
 the dairy, stealing ghi is included, but it was clear that this
 is regarded as sacrilege, as an offence against the dairy and
 not as an offence committed against the individual.

SUICIDE

In the legend of Kwoten there is a record of suicide by
 strangling, and since the suicide of Erten and his confederates
 this is said to have been a recognised custom among the
 Todas. Several instances have occurred in recent times; thus,
 about four generations ago, at a village called Podzkwar, near
 Taradrkirsi, a woman and her husband had a dispute and the
 woman strangled herself. About three generations ago a man
 strangled himself in the dairy at Melgars, and when a Toda
 is very angry he will threaten to commit suicide, saying "*on
 mēdr kati kēdraividikin*"—"my neck tying, I will die."

Another way of committing suicide, said to have been
 borrowed from the Badagas, is that of taking opium. There
 has been a recent case of suicide, by this means, and when
 angry, a Toda sometimes says, "*mud tid kēdraividikin*"—
 "Opium eating, I will die."

THE MONEGAR

The Todas have a *monegar*, or headman, who is responsible
 for the assessment which the Todas pay to Government for
 their grazing rights, &c. (see below).

The general type of the Toda character is most unvarying ; singularly frank, affable, and self-possessed, cheerful yet staid : respectful, seemingly from a sense of conscious inferiority rather than from an active principle : fearless, from small cause for fear more than from the stimulus of a latent power of oppositeness : communicative, yet watchful and shy, as if their natures impelled them to divulge what their natures also prompted them to maintain quiet : willing to take money,¹ yet accepting what is proffered with callousness, allowing it to lie on the ground or their children to play with it. In villages without an article *de luxe* beyond a few women's ornaments, one may see naked children decorated liberally with small coin. The investment was no doubt safe round their necks and loins, but the very safety implies an absence of theft and violence, which is fully confirmed by the testimony of the law courts of the district. Their main crimes appear to consist in struggles to avoid payment of their debts for money borrowed on bonds from the Badagas.

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According to superior notions, they are not a moral race ; yet a knowledge of many little facts that could not well be recorded, leaves the impression on my mind that they have certain limits in decent custom (well understood by them, though rarely primitive to our civilised conceptions of what is respectable) which are probably not often transgressed. I could not hope, without a far greater knowledge of the people than could be obtained except by residing long amongst them, to give anything approaching a just definition of their private ways. I fancy, however, that they are less bounded by acknowledged rule than by the gentleness and simplicity, though rude nature, of their character.

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Though their intellect is of a very inferior order, and their force of character extremely small, and no great man of

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¹ The Todas living in proximity to the haunts of Englishmen, do not hesitate to importune for money with the greatest and most childlike pertinency ; yet if unsuccessful are not a bit distressed.

in point, the only one I really came across. A man in his thirties, he was reputed to be a wanderer, travelling incessantly over the Nilgiri downs without any home at which to stay. He was not known to have any attachments at all, let alone feminine ones, and the explanation for this which I obtained from Kanvarsathi was illuminating. Pangur was supposed to have been excessively repressed in childhood, so that he had never got over the habit of masturbation. Again, I was struck by the very orthodox psychoanalytical nature of this interpretation coming from a people who have no notions of the modern development of psychology in the West. It was as if their lack of prudery in sexual matters coupled with a primitive commonsense were sufficient to make them understand these things much better than anyone in our societies would. [158] [828] [839]

Both the Todas and the local Indian medical practitioners whom I interrogated on this question, said that they had never heard of or seen any case of insanity in the tribe. And this in spite of syphilis being (or having been until lately) rampant among them, although, it seems obvious, only in a mild form which does not bring about nervous disorders such as with us. [164]

Suicide, on the other hand, was far from unknown, and numerous instances could be cited. Formerly, the recognized method of doing away with oneself was, as Rivers has recorded it (see *The Todas*, p. 555): hanging with a *kakhudri* (*Dregea volubilis*, Benth) creeper. This because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said to have killed himself in this way, after his master had been carried away by the goddess Terkosh (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 201). Nowadays, however, opium has taken the place of this more antiquated method, a habit which, it is considered, has been adopted from the Badagas. Sriar's father, Izcheidi (20), thus committed suicide by taking the drug, because his wife had been carried away from him. because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said have ended her life by taking opium after the death of her son. [762] [824] [773] [276] [177]

Concerning crime, Rivers says: "It is, however, doubtful whether crime can be said to exist among the Todas," (*The Todas*, pp. 553-4). Certainly the tribe appears to be made up of remarkably meek and peaceful individuals, they having no arms at all, a rare occurrence among any human beings on earth. Nor is there any indication that they ever had any. From questioning I gathered that Todas often quarrel, shouting and even beating each other with the very attractive walking-sticks which it is their speciality to manufacture. But nothing [674] [411] [578]

578 worse was, to begin with, ever brought to my notice by my informants.
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When, however, I delved more deeply into the matter, I soon found out that appearances were very deceptive, and that under a peaceful exterior, many serious acts of aggression had taken and were still taking place. Personal feuds of intense hatred and jealousy, especially among the older men, seemed to be the reasons for what were not just empty accusations of witchcraft, but unmistakably crimes, and I gathered so much evidence of this that I have come to think that there are very few influential old Todas who die a natural death. They are more usually done away with by their rivals, through the time-honoured method of having them poisoned by the Kurumbas, mainly, I think, with *datura*.

578 Thus Karnoz of Melgarsh (45), whom I got to know very well, was
682 greatly feared as a *pili* (sorcerer). When I returned to the Nilgiris for
754 the second time in 1949, I found that he had reputedly done away
115 with Ujar (48), my old and trusted informant, his uncle and chief of
662 the Melgarsh *modol*, simply because he wished to take his place at the head of the *clan*. He had had him poisoned by his "own" Kurumbas, as it was put to me, after having first got the deceased's wife and two children out of the way in the same manner. The remaining members of the murdered man's family had fled in terror to Kakhwurkh *mad* and their house stood empty and forlorn at Melgarsh when I came back there in 1949. Karnoz was fined Rs. 12 by the *noim* for this crime and warned that, if he persisted in practising sorcery, his house would be set on fire, and he himself killed.

683 While working with the widow of Kuriolv (52), whom Rivers describes
623 in such eloquent terms (see *The Todas*, pp. 551-2), my wife discovered that, after having rid himself of rivals and wives alike by the habitual Toda method of indirect poisoning through the agency of the Kurumbas, he was himself murdered in the same way by his wife. He ended his life practically at the same time as his rival and victim Arjgur (56) who, in a neighbouring house at Kuur, died from the effects of the poison which he, Kuriolv, had himself administered to him.

648 During my second stay in the Nilgiris in 1949, Pillar (52) poisoned
Tödhem of Apersgor because he had had a son by a woman whom Pillar had given up, believing her to be barren. The deed was committed by a Kurumba in Pillar's pay who gave the poison with some milk to Tödhem at a funeral which I attended. I later tried to get the ailing man to hospital in Ootacamund in order to look better into his case as well as to try to save him, but to no avail. I came up against